



**Testimony of Susan Eastwood, Director of Communications and Outreach,  
Clean Water Action and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Children  
In Support of RB 6526, An Act Concerning Toxics Disclosure and Innovation  
for Healthy Children  
March 5, 2013**

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and honorable members of the Children's Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in strong support of **RB 6526, An Act Concerning Toxics Disclosure and Innovation for Healthy Children.**

My name is Susan Eastwood. I am the Director of Communications and Outreach with Clean Water Action and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut, a group of over 50 non-profits working to phase out toxic chemicals from everyday products. I live in Ashford and am also a parent of two children who suffer from asthma and allergies.

I am concerned about the overwhelming body of scientific research that links exposure to toxic chemicals in our everyday products with the rising incidence of many serious diseases. Over 30 years of environmental health studies have linked toxins to diseases such as cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's as well as asthma, infertility and learning disabilities. Young children and developing fetuses are especially vulnerable; exposure to even a small amount can affect a child for life. In 2010, the President's Cancer Panel Report stated that exposure to toxic chemicals is a serious risk factor for many cancers and called for urgent reform of ineffective chemical laws.<sup>1</sup>

There is growing consensus that the federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) does not adequately protect citizens from harmful chemicals in everyday products. Last year, U.S. Senators Lautenberg, Boxer, Klobuchar, Shumer and others introduced the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 intended to reform the outdated TSCA. Our nation's workers, consumers, and children need to be protected by stronger, more comprehensive chemical policy reforms that define intelligent and responsible development and use of the thousands of chemicals manufactured in the world today.

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<sup>1</sup> Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk: What we can do now, the President's cancer panel [Internet]. Bethesda: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; [cited 2010 April] Available from: [http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/pcp/annualReports/pcp08-09rpt/PCP\\_Report\\_08-09\\_508.pdf](http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/pcp/annualReports/pcp08-09rpt/PCP_Report_08-09_508.pdf).

But federal reform efforts are unlikely to pass in the near future so the states must lead the way! **RB 6526** continues Connecticut's leadership in protecting citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, from toxic chemicals and takes meaningful steps forward to identify chemicals of high concern and establish a sustainable process to reduce exposure or give citizens much needed information. This bill sets up a realistic, collaborative system with our state agency experts and others to review scientific research and other states' work, create a list of chemicals of concern and prioritize two or three of the most harmful based on toxicity and exposure. Manufacturers would be required to disclose the presence of those most harmful chemicals in children's products sold in the state and develop a "product innovation plan" that details how they will shift to a safer alternative within a certain time period.

The bill will not place an undue burden on our state agencies or on manufacturers. Because the European Union, Maine, Washington, California and Minnesota have already identified chemicals of concern, the Department of Public Health can utilize these lists rather than recreating the wheel. And manufacturers are already reporting the presence of toxic chemicals in the European Union, Maine and Washington and soon will be in other states.

The European Union is in the process of phasing out hundreds of chemicals of high concern as part of their REACH legislation. Many countries are following the lead of the EU, including China, and U.S. manufacturers will have to find and use safer alternatives in order to stay competitive in the world market. Even leading American companies recognize that shifting to safer alternatives is not only good for public health but makes good economic sense.<sup>2</sup>

**RB 6526** would help Connecticut to lead in manufacturing products that families can trust. **Parents don't want harmful chemicals in children's products!!!** This proposal is an economic development opportunity for green jobs growth and will assure that CT products can be sold in the international marketplace. This will help our state businesses and the CT economy as a whole, as well as protecting workers and consumers from exposure to toxins. Taking meaningful steps to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals will ultimately reduce health care costs in Connecticut as well.<sup>3</sup>

Connecticut has been a national leader by phasing out lead, cadmium, mercury and BPA however, this is not enough! Parents should not have to wonder whether common household products are harming their children!

I urge you to make passing **RB 6526** a priority this legislative session.

Thank you,

Susan C. Eastwood  
178 Waterfall Road  
Ashford, CT 06278

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<sup>2</sup>Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, "Chemicals and Our Health: Why Recent Science is a Call to Action" (2012)

<sup>3</sup> Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, "The Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act" (2009).